

AUVERGNAT PRONUNCIATION SOUND-SPELLING SUMMARY

Auvergnat Vowel Pronunciation

- Many of the points of Auvergnat pronunciation can be linked to Spanish.
- As in Spanish, and unlike French, the acute accent mark can indicate the stressed syllable of the word: *pastré*.
- Accent marks, acute, grave, indicate open or closed as in French spellings.
- Vowels are treated as the same seven vowels of Italian and Spanish, including open and closed versions of written “e” and written “o”, and with the addition of the French mixed vowel [y].
- There are no particular rules on when to use open or closed “o”.
- [y] is used for written “u” (NOT “ou”), but can be heard pronounced slightly farther back on the hard palate, as in Québec or as with the short German [ʏ] of *Glück*. (CD Véronique Gens)
- There are no nasal vowels. The m or n following the vowel may have several pronunciations. (See Consonants and Interesting Points.)
- Written “o” and written “a” may be interchanged. This is reflected in McCann’s transcriptions. Stressed or unstressed does not seem to be a factor: the unstressed o’s of *ogatso* are transcribed as [a ga tsa] (p.39). The stressed o of *gorða* is transcribed as [garða] (p.31).

This is a small but confusing point of Auvergnat pronunciation with no standard codification. It explains McCann’s choices for IPA transcription and contradictions on recordings.

- Unlike French, Auvergnat has diphthongs and triphthongs. One of the vowels will be stressed and longer than the others.
- Fitting in the diphthong and triphthong pronunciation is the trickiest part of Auvergnat vowel pronunciation.

- Written “ou” is complex. The accent mark helps.

ou = [u]
 òu = [ọ u]
 oou = [ọ u]
 ouò = [ẉọ]
 iò = [j̣ọ]
 iou = [ị u]
 iòu = [j̣ọ u]

Lou (*the*) is always pronounced as [ḷọ].

- The remaining vowel combinations with the stressed vowel underlined are:

<u>i</u> ei = [jei]	<u>a</u> ô = [ạo]
<u>i</u> eu = [jeu]	<u>a</u> ī = [ại]
	<u>è</u> ī = [ɛ̣i]
	<u>o</u> ī = [ọi]
Exception	<u>o</u> î = [ọị]

Auvergnat Consonant Pronunciation

- Auvergnat consonant pronunciation also has much in common with Spanish.
- ***The most variable aspects are:***

hard and soft “c” and “g” combinations
 “j” pronunciation
 “m, n” pronunciation
 final consonant pronunciation

- Written c followed by a, o, or u is [k].
- Written ch is [tʃ] as in Spanish.
- Written c followed by e or i is [s] as in French. Written ç is [s].
- Written s is [s]. Between vowels and in liaison, s is voiced [z].

- Written absolute initial g followed by a, o, u, is pronounced hard [g].
- As in Spanish, written g in the middle of a word or breath phrase can be softened to [ɣ]. This is the sound of a voiced *achlaut*: that is, as in *Bach*, but with voicing added.
- Written gu and qu when followed by a vowel are pronounced [g] and [k].
- Written g followed by e or i is pronounced *in general* as soft [dʒ], but may be heard on recordings as [dz] as well (Dav Rath).
- Written j or dj or dz is generally pronounced as [dʒ]. But you may hear [dz] on recordings (Dav Rath).
- If the word is very familiar in French, such as *bonjour*, the “j” may be pronounced [ʒ] as in modern French.
- As in Spanish, lh is [ʎ]; that is [l j] sung very smoothly.
- Written nh is pronounced as [ɲ] as in Spanish *mañana*.
- As in Spanish and Italian, written n when followed by [g] or [k], becomes [ŋ].
- Written ts may be [ts] or “slushed” to [t ʃ]. In other words, the hiss of the [ts] is softened to [t ʃ].
- **Auvergnat Final Consonant Pronunciation**, notably for m, n, p, r, s, and t, as recommended by McCann, can be soft, minimal, or not at all. Various sources cited by McCann – as well as the speaker with whom I work – confirm that a light pronunciation of a final consonant is acceptable and in line with Occitan pronunciation in general.

Final n may be silent or nasalized to a soft [ɲ] (as in “song”) *adding slight nasality to the preceding vowel*.

Final r may be silent at the end of infinitives: *mourir* [mu.ri] (Gens, Grey)

Final s may be pronounced to indicate plural or to add emphasis. But delivery on recordings is really unpredictable. Véronique Gens in her recordings quite frequently delivers the final s (plural or not), yet in some of the tracks far less frequently.

For pronouns such as *ès* (it), *bous/vuous* (“you”), *nous* (“we”), and also *dous* (“two”), and *olprès* (*auprès* “nearby”), the s appears to be commonly pronounced (Davrath, Gens, Grey)

- For very well-known French words such as *pas*, the s may be silent.

Interesting Details:

- As in Spanish, v may be pronounced as [b] at the beginning of a phrase and as [β] (a combination of [b] and [v] in the middle of words or word phrases). For example:

Baïlèro lèrô. Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô baïlèro lô
[baïlɛrɔlɛrɔ lɛrɔ lɛrɔ lɛrɔ βaïlɛrɔ lɔ]

The word *bayle* meant “head shepherd” in the Auvergnat dialect and inspired the title of the *Baïlèro*, a “calling” interchange between shepherds in neighbouring valleys.

Because of the b/v interchange, the initial [b] of *bayle* subsequently evolved to [v] and into the modern word *valet*.

As well, you may see *Auvergne* written as *Aubergne*. Note also the *bous/vuous* (*you*) interchange.

- Written m may be assimilated (absorbed) into an [n] pronunciation space. For example: *temps* = [tɛns].
- Written n may be absorbed into a written v space: *convidar* [kɔvɪdɑ].
- Written n can also be absorbed into written m space if followed by lip-pronounced consonants b/v, m, or p. So that *convidar* could also be pronounced as [kɔmβɪdɑr] (See McCann, p. 21 for the two transcriptions of *convidar*.)